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THE CLASSIFICATION OF RELIGIONS.

INTRODUCTION.

Objective Illustrations: Their Sphere and Importance.

THERE is an old proverb which says: "Order is the first law of Heaven," and the consensus of men has long ago decided that the laws of Heaven should be the laws of earth. To labor without some law or system is to fore-ordain fruitless result, although to be always ordering, or to be tied to a system, is no whit better. The one is lawless disregard of just observances; the other is self-enforced slavery to imaginary needs and requirements or to principles held in exaggerated esteem. Somewhere between these lines lies a successful mean. System and classification are valuable, if they are used only as suggestion. They must never shape the facts, but the facts must shape them. Facts are many-sided and have many relations. No system or classification can do more than illustrate *some* of these. If it does this, it has an important value. If it cannot do this, it is valueless. If other phases and relations are to be suggested, another classification is necessary. Only shortsightedness will insist on the sufficiency of one arrangement. Different purposes must have their different methods. When system in the presentation of complex or abstract thought takes the form of classifications which may appeal to the eye, it has incalculable value. Nearly every topic can by the exercise of a little

ingenuity and energy be illustrated in an objective manner in which the interest may be heightened and the impression made more vivid and lasting. The justification and importance of such an attempt lie in the nature of our thought, so large a part of which is ordered in terms of space and time. When the eye can be brought to the aid of the imaging faculty a success may often be gained in the grasping of a thought which would otherwise be a failure. Again, when a map, a diagram, or analytic chart can be brought before the sight, not only are the above results accomplished, but that most important end of all education may be aided as in no other way, viz., the broadening of the mind, since in this way the scope of a subject and the internal and external relationships may be seen at a glance in their wholeness and fulness. Indeed, a good classification may do more in the way of suggestion and further stimulation for a susceptible mind than the most detailed explanation of the facts in a prosier way. For such reasons as these, the subjects we are here considering will be interspersed frequently with devices of various sorts helping to make less the tediousness of the recital of facts and aiding, it is hoped, towards an increase of interest and a broader understanding.

Some Recent Classifications of Religions.

The subject of Religion is exceptionally susceptible of classification. In recent times it has been often and in various ways attempted: sometimes from the point of view of the objects of worship, sometimes from historical sequences and characteristics, sometimes from certain philosophical standpoints or to illustrate certain underlying philosophical principles, and sometimes from an incongruous mixture of different principles. The various methods of classifications, so far as I have met them, fall severally under one of the four following headings:

A. Classifications from certain preconceived assumptions or standards of authority based on philosophical or theological dogma;

B. Classifications from external characteristics of the religions, i. e., from the character of their individual, objective features and beliefs, or their mere names and number of adherents;

C. Classifications from the subjective side based on a psychology of the subject, i. e., on the internal characteristics;

D. Classifications from racial relationships and from actually traceable mutual historical influences (including linguistic and other geneological schemes).

All of these methods of grouping (even those under A) have their value, often a very great one. They only overstep their province when they claim to be the sole legitimate method or even the best method. They can at most do what it is possible for a classification to do, viz., illustrate a certain general phase, relationship, tendency, etc. Each must in the nature of the case omit the special advantages of the others; yet through all, the general character of the subject may be seen, just as one can see and recognize the same landscape from different points of view, while in each new standpoint we get new and otherwise impossible impressions. He will know it best who is at pains to view it from all the available points. So in the study of religions, the most varied views should be most welcome, so long as they are not partial, overdrawn, or fantastically colored. Only by various classifications and methods of study is it possible to bring out the manifoldness of the great idea

A. CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON DOGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS.

Under this heading may in general be placed all classifications which have occurred in Christendom down to quite recent times. This holds true of both the most con-

servative and liberal writers. Religions were of two classes: *true* and *false*. Christianity was true, all others (including its parent Judaism) were false; and to bring out the opprobrium of the contrast most fully the term "Heathenism" was applied to the extra-Christian world. The Jews would have dubbed them "Gentiles"; the Greeks, "Barbarians." If there was any apparent truth among the "heathen" it would be found in the end to be untrue, or it was claimed that evil was so mixed with it as to render its effects wholly bad. Neither in doctrine or cultus had Christendom anything to learn from Heathendom. To wicked priest-craft and to the Devil was assigned the origin of all its institutions. They took advantage of the fallen sinful condition of man, buried him with erroneous doctrines, and bound him in slavery to false worship and debasing superstitious practices. (Of course the writers themselves were members of the true.)

A second theory on this basis having the same meaning but couched in different terms, was that which classed religions as *natural* and *revealed*.* Yet in Christendom this was an advance on the former in two ways: first it enlarged the sphere of exclusiveness so that now both Judaism and Christianity were included on the side of revealed religions, while all others were invented or natural. Then again the terms of description and contrast were milder, although it was yet implied that the former were from God and the others from man (the Devil not receiving quite so large a share of credit). The natural religions however were in no way sufficient for man's needs. He had sunken from an original state of bliss and innocence to so low a condition that supernatural Divine interposition

* It must be observed, that from the point of view of the adherents of each religion, all the others are "false" and "natural" while theirs is "true" and "revealed." Hence *the* religion that should stand on the one side over against the others in the contrast of the legitimate against the illegitimate, would depend entirely on the birth-place of the classifier.

was necessary to prevent his utter ruin. The fatal consequences of sin could in no other way be counteracted. Hence we observe, the classing of religions was the outline of the theological or rather doctrinal attitude toward them. Theologians resting their faith on Church dogma could of course have no other view. Hence even the most liberal of them must hold this general attitude. James Foster in a sermon on "The Advantages of a Revelation," speaking of the condition of the world at the birth of Christ, says: "Just notions of God were, in general, erased from the minds of men. His worship was debased and polluted, and scarce any traces could be discerned of the genuine and immutable religion of nature." Here is an unusually liberal view of the so-called natural religion for a man of the eighteenth century, yet it contains the denial of even the comforts which this might have afforded to the men of those times. From men of philosophical tendencies the attitude was substantially the same. This could not be otherwise from the belief which men universally held regarding the moral and religious state of primitive man. They one and all believed him to have been originally perfect, they observed him to be far from that now. He must have been degraded. They read of things in history repulsive to their feelings and unseen in their circle of experience. They generalized this into the universal condition of the times alluded to. Distance in time and racial dislike gave the imagination scope, and the consequence was a theory anything but philosophical. John Locke, (1632-1704) one of the greatest if not the greatest English mind of his day, referring to the times of the beginning of the Christian era, says in his "Reasonableness of Christianity": "Men had given themselves up into the hands of their priests, to fill their heads with false notions of the Deity, and their worship with foolish rites, as they pleased; and what dread or craft once began, devotion soon made sacred,

and religion immutable." "In this state of darkness and ignorance of the true God, vice and superstition held the world." Heathendom, all and entire, morally and religiously was eschewed. Some of the Greek and Roman classical authors were good to read as literature, and a few writers upheld the study of Greek philosophy, notably the "Cambridge Platonists," while the Logic of Aristotle was generally in good repute.

But I must mention an opinion or two from Church history, that we may better see the prevalent teaching of the investigators and observe a further basis for this sort of classification. Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (1694-1755), one of the most widely read and influential writers during the latter half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th, and a man revered for his great learning and sincerity by the general use of his text-books during a hundred years, says concerning this period in the first chapter of his "Church History": "All nations of the world, except the Jews, were plunged in the grossest superstitions. Some nations, indeed, went beyond others in impiety and absurdity, but all stood charged with irrationality and gross stupidity in matters of religion." "The worship of these deities consisted in ceremonies, sacrifices, and prayers. The ceremonies were, for the most part, absurd and ridiculous, and throughout debasing, obscene, and cruel. The prayers were truly insipid and void of piety, both in their form and matter." "The whole pagan system had not the least efficacy to produce and cherish virtuous emotions in the soul; because the gods and goddesses were patterns of vice, the priests bad men, and the doctrines false." (Quoted by J. F. Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, 21st ed. B. 1884, pp. 5-6.)

A similar picture of the period spoken of may be found in Geikie's *Life and Words of Christ*. If space permitted, I should illustrate this attitude from writers who construct

their classification of present religions on this same basis. And yet it is so general an assumption that we need not ask to have it illustrated. The theory usually urged for sending and sustaining Christian missionaries in various parts of the world is an ever re-current witness of it. Moreover, if one is looking for the foundations of things, he may find this assumption at the bottom of a vast amount of the religious literature of our times. Without further comment upon it, I will add a few lines from Dr. J. F. Clarke (*Ten Great Religions*, p. 7) who in speaking of this attitude toward the "ethnic" religions says:

"Apply a similar theory to any other human institution, and how patent is its absurdity! Let a republican contend that all other forms of government—the patriarchal system, government by castes, the feudal system, absolute and limited monarchies, oligarchies, and aristocracies—are wholly useless and evil, and were the result of statecraft alone, with no root in human nature or the needs of man. Let one maintain that every system of *law* (except our own) was an invention of lawyers for private ends. Let one argue in the same way about medicine, and say that this is a pure system of quackery, devised by physicians in order to get a support out of the people for doing nothing. We should at once reply that, though error and ignorance may play a part in all these institutions, they cannot be based on error and ignorance only. Nothing which has not in it some elements of use can hold its position in the world during so long a time and over so wide a range. It is only reasonable to say the same of heathen or ethnic religions. . . . Unless they contained more of good than evil, they could not have kept their place. They partially satisfied a great hunger of the human heart. They exercised some restraint on human wilfulness and passion. They have directed, however imperfectly, the human conscience toward the right."

B. CLASSIFICATIONS FROM OBJECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS.

I. According to the Nature of the Objects Worshipped.

This is the most general classification of those inclined to be scholarly and broad. It not only has numerous representatives in books, but is probably the only one that can

CLASSIFICATION OF RELIGIONS ACCORDING TO THE NATURE OF THE OBJECTS WORSHIPPED	NON-RELIGIOUS PEOPLES, or A-THEISM.	
	FETICHISM	{ Negroes of Central Africa Some S. Amer. Indians Australians, etc.
	TOTEMISM	{ N. E. Asiatic Peoples N. Amer. Indians Some Polynesians Ancient Egyptians, etc.
	SHAMANISM	{ Some N. Amer. Indians " N. Asiaticans " Papuans, Tamans, New Hebridians, etc. " Mohammedans, etc.
	ANIMISM	{ An element intermixed in the religions of all peoples, but especially characteristic of Chinese, Ancient Greeks and Romans.
	POLYTHEISM	{ Greeks, Romans, and Germans of Ancient Times All Ancient Semites Ancient Hindus Early Chinese and Japanese Aztec-Toltecs (Indeed, all religions, except Christianity, Mohammedan- ism, and Judaism, when contrasted with Monotheism.)
	DUALISM	{ Persians (best representatives) Modern Hindus (in certain respects) Manichaeans of Middle Ages, Some Christian and Mohammedan theories
	MONOTHEISM	{ Jews generally since prophetic times Higher religious conceptions in Ancient India, Modern Europe, and Mohammedan lands
	MONISM	{ Upanishad and Vedanta Philosophers of India Lao-Tsze of China Eleatic School of Greece Many Modern Mystics: Bruno, Eckhardt, Böhme, etc. Idealists: Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, etc. Realists: Spinoza, etc.

be said to be popular among those classifications that deserve respect as aspiring to be scientific. Several of its divisions are in the most universal circulation, yet not all of them are so well understood, hence I shall give and explain them more fully than would otherwise be necessary. (See chart.)

1. *Non-religious Peoples*, if there be such, should be mentioned first. Many reputable authorities claim to have discovered tribes devoid of religious ideas. (See the works of Dr. Monnat, Sir Samuel Baker, David Livingstone, Sir Messenger Bradley, and Sir John Lubbock.) The testimony is disputed on the ground of its incompleteness and for other reasons, hence I will place no peoples under this topic. (Buddhism was at first an atheistic religion—i. e., in any of the usual senses.)

2. *Fetichism*, the worship of simple and casually selected objects which have come to be regarded as possessing in some way a superior power, such as stones, bones, shells, herbs, bits of wood, feathers, weapons, etc. In general, this is the religious condition of those peoples in the lowest stage of civilization, or the so-called "savage" state.

3. *Totemism* (or Nature Worship), the religious regard of objects of nature in a somewhat larger and less servile way, as of mountains, rocks, water, rivers, groves, trees, animals (serpents, cattle, etc.), and, in higher forms, the heavens, sun, moon, etc. This form of worship is found with peoples a stage higher than the last.

4. *Shamanism*, in which the deities are of the most diverse character, including the Fetichistic, Totemistic, and polytheistic orders; but the method of approaching them is through magical formulas, incantations, etc., the performance or recital of which is believed to exercise an authority over them. If properly carried out, it is believed to extort from them the fulfilment of the applicant's wishes, whether these be temporal present needs or the disclosure of future

events. This form of religion is thought to be the dominant characteristic of most of the so-called "barbarous nations."

5. *Animism*, or the worship of ancestral spirits, is the belief that the soul after death has special opportunities for doing good or evil to the living, and hence is to be honored or propitiated. It is very wide spread and can scarcely be said to be the characteristic form of any stage of development.

6. *Polytheism*, the worship of many gods. This is a term capable of covering the whole range of religion below monotheism, but which is best used to designate a stage in which the gods are not longer natural objects, but entities or spirits in or independent of these. It is the characteristic of the religion of peoples on the border of or somewhat advanced in civilization, the so-called "civilized peoples," as distinguished from the "enlightened" above and "savage" below.

7. *Dualism*, the belief in two deities, one benevolent the other malevolent, the form of religion that accounts for the good and the evil of the world by referring each to a supreme cause having a nature in accord with the character of its creations.

8. *Monotheism*, the faith that one all-wise, all-good, and almighty being alone created, guides and governs the universe for ultimate good ends. This Being is regarded as a spirit transcendent to or over against the world of his creation. The type attained by the great majority of peoples in the most enlightened nations.

9. *Monism*, the view that the universe is a real unity in which the manifold diversity is only apparent; that the creating, guiding power and intelligence is immanent in it and not above or over against it; that the so-called material and spiritual are qualitatively the same (by one school all being regarded as material, by another as spiritual, and

by yet others the whole being spoken of as an unknown essence). This division has no representatives among nations or special peoples, but has been and is held by various individuals and schools of thought in various ages and various parts of the world. It embraces wide extremes, and must comprehend most of those included under the terms: idealists, phenomenologists, materialists, organicists, mystics, spiritists, etc.

* * *

It will be observed that these terms are none of them very definite, and that used combinedly in a classification they are loose. Their suggestiveness at best is somewhat vague, and without care is apt to be misleading, since it will be found that no people arranges itself exclusively under one of these headings, but that all of the varieties are found among the highest nations, while even the lowest peoples have some of the higher elements. Such religions as Confucianism and Buddhism, having the most numerous followings, really find no place in such a classification.

II. According to the Worshipers' Estimates of their Deities.

Sir John Lubbock, a careful student of ethnology and an investigator who has much to say worthy of hearing, objects to the usual classification of religions according to the nature of the objects worshiped. His method has somewhat of originality, though not more exact or by any means so different from the method he refuses, as he believed it to be. He proceeds to sort them over on the principle by which the deity is estimated by the worshipers. The result is a division of seven chief types. The first five are designated by terms in general use, the other two having no specific name. I will give the whole for what they may suggest. (See his *Origin of Civilization*, 4th ed., L., 1882, pp. 205-6.)

1. "*A-theism*; understanding by this term not a denial of the existence of a Deity, but an absence of any definite ideas on the subject."

2. "*Fetichism*; the stage in which man supposes he can force the deities to comply with his desires."

3. "*Nature-Worship* or *Totemism*; in which natural objects, trees, lakes, stones, animals, etc., are worshiped."

4. "*Shamanism*; in which the superior deities are far more powerful than man, and of a different nature. Their place of abode also is far away, and accessible only to Shamans."

5. "*Idolatry* or *Anthropomorphism*; in which the gods take still more completely the nature of men, being, however, more powerful. They are still amenable to persuasion; they are a part of nature, and not creators. They are represented by images or idols."

6. "In the next stage the deity is regarded as the author, not merely a part of nature. He becomes for the first time a really supernatural being."

7. "The last stage is that in which morality is associated with religion."

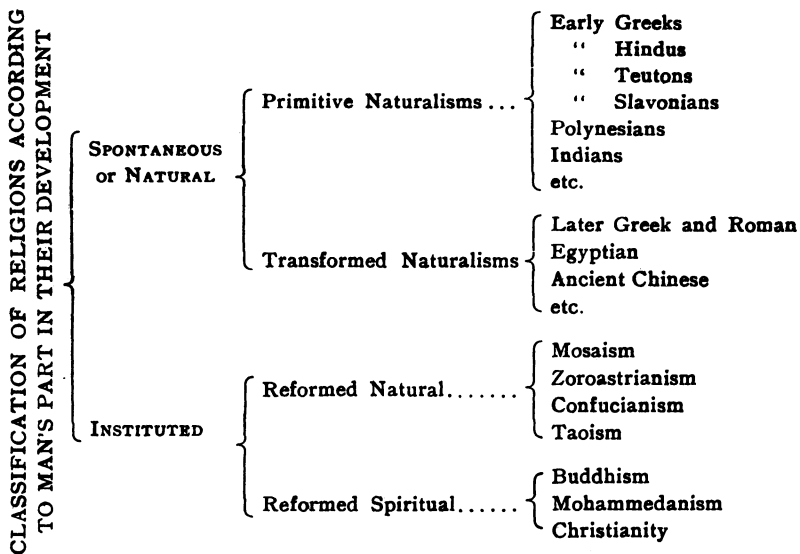
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This classification attempts to proceed strictly on the basis of progress in the development of religious ideas. When practically applied, it is not less confusing than the former, and is equally inadequate to define the character of the religion of any given people; although in the last two divisions it makes useful discriminations.

III. According to the Part Played by Man in their Development.—Historical Method.

1. *Prof. W. D. Whitney*, the celebrated Sanskrit scholar and Orientalist of Yale College, has instituted the classification of religions into *National* and *Individual*. I will let him explain himself. In an essay entitled, "On the

So-called Science of Religion," he says: "There is no more marked distinction among religions than the one we are called upon to make between a race religion—which, like a language, is the collective product of the wisdom of a community, the unconscious growth of generations—and a religion proceeding from an individual founder, who, as leading representative of the better insight and feeling of his time (for otherwise he would meet with no success), makes head against formality and superstition, and recalls his fellowmen to sincere and intelligent faith in a new body of doctrines, of especially moral aspect, to which he himself gives shape and coherence. Of this origin are Zoroastrianism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism; and, from the point of view of the general historian of religions, whatever difference of character and authority he may recognize in its founder, Christianity belongs in the same class with them, as being an individual and universal religion, growing out of one that was limited to a race."



2. DR. FAIRBAIRN of Scotland, a man who has written and lectured considerably on the comparative study of re-

ligions, makes his classification on the same basis as that of Professor Whitney, viz., from the part man's conscious and individual intentions have played in bringing them to the condition in which we find them in history. (*Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History*.) His terms are different, though meaning practically the same. He further subdivides the two main divisions, and, under these, religions are cited as examples. (See Chart.)

(1) *Spontaneous or Natural Religions*, those that have grown up out of a people collectively, e. g., the religion of ancient Greece. These he further subdivides into:

(a) Primitive Naturalisms.

(b) Transformed Naturalisms.

(2) *Instituted Religions*, or those which have their origin in some great personality, e. g., Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, etc. This again is of two kinds:

(a) Reformed natural religions,

(b) Reformed spiritual religions.

Each of these divisions, he claims, shades into the others. Nature's gradations are too fine for our subtlest distinctions. The naturalisms bring forth the historical; the instituted presupposes the spontaneous.

This classification too, like the others, calls attention to certain facts which deserve notice. When not too carefully scrutinized the divisions offer useful intimations. There is a sense in which certain religions are more spontaneous than others, or than the same are at later times. The consciousness of man was not so active in early as in later times. Moreover the simpler and less conscious growths must have come to take on crystallized forms before the reforming recreative spirits could be operative, and these efforts of the reformers and founders have again a freshness and spontaneity which the same religion in later times does not possess. Indeed, the latter is then to

the former as an "instituted" to a "spontaneous" religion. Hence we perceive that in the end the division is only a very relative one, i. e., that it has no intrinsic basis in the nature of religions themselves, but only applies to temporal changes coming about sooner or later in the process of all religious development. Nor have the remarks "growing up out of the people collectively" and "originating in some great personality," any more than an intimative significance. They are not divisions which correspond literally to the facts. As to the first, it is only the darkness which hovers over the history of nations in early times that enables us to speak of spontaneous developments unaided by great personalities, if humanity was governed by the same general laws then that it has been within historic times (and we have no ground to assume otherwise). We must believe that compared with the rest of their contemporary fellowmen, there have every now and then lived in the world those great personalities which set in motion certain influences relatively, though not entirely, new. And this leads me to say of the second remark, viz., that about certain religions "originating in great personalities," that these great personalities are only in a very qualified sense their originators. They are possessed of a broader, deeper consciousness which takes up into itself the facts or light of their age better and more thoroughly than others; they see more plainly and clearly the way the experiences of mankind point; they draw more faithfully and truly the higher inductions of their times: hence they become to others the apparent originators, in some perhaps supernatural way, of great ideas and religions. To themselves and to those who can appreciate with them this fuller consciousness and those more farreaching inductions, they are not more a mystery than the rest of life's experience. It is only to the mass of smaller minds that they appear origi-

nators in that absolute sense, or that they come indeed later to be deified.

The remarks which are here passed are applicable alike to the two presentations of this basis of classifying religions. The classification is suggestive and helpful, but it is a mistake to suppose it either deeply grounded or final.

After writing the above my attention was called to the fact that Prof. Max Müller (although adopting a classification equally untenable when exclusively insisted upon) had objected to this method of classification before Professor Whitney's essay was published, on similar ground to that which is here taken, viz., that though neither Brahman, Greek, nor Roman could point to the founder of his religion, yet "the student of antiquity can still discover the influence of individual minds or schools or climates. If on the other hand we ask the founders of so-called individual religions, whether their doctrine is a new one, whether they preach a new God, we almost always receive a negative answer. Confucius emphatically asserts that he was a transmitter, not a maker; Buddha delights in representing himself as a mere link in a long chain of enlightened teachers; Christ declares that he came to fulfil, not to destroy the Law or the Prophets; and even Muhammed insisted on tracing his faith back to Abrāhym, i. e., Abraham, the friend of God, whom he called a Moslim, and not a Jew or Christian, (Koran iii, 60) and who, he maintained, had founded the temple at Mekka. To determine how much is peculiar to the supposed founder of a religion, how much he received from his predecessors, and how much was added by his disciples, is almost impossible; nay, it is perfectly true that no religion has ever struck root and lived, unless it found a congenial soil from which to draw its strength and support." (See *Science of Religion*, 140.)

Professor Tiele, objecting to this same method, asks, "What is the wisdom of a community but the wisdom of its

more enlightened members, that is, of individuals?" Every myth, rite, or eternal truth, in any religion was the work of an individual mind, and I must re-affirm that it is only from the fact of their lying so much in the dark, that we speak of unconscious growths and spontaneous generation.

Moreover, these founders could have no success if they were so supremely and vastly ahead of their people as is hinted. What they spoke was only waiting in others' hearts for a mouth-piece. It is just because their better insight gathers up into itself merely in clearer manner what many less clearly feel, because they are able to lend shape to the more advanced ideas which the community has already come up to and which are already agreeable to the minds of many as soon as expressed. Individuals are ever at work, and the community is ever making some sort of growth. The one is conscious, the other not; but neither goes on without being in a true sense the product of the other. Sometimes in the course of events the individual's opportunities are greater and his efforts shine forth in more glaring light, but the underlying relationship and bond of mutual dependence is never broken.

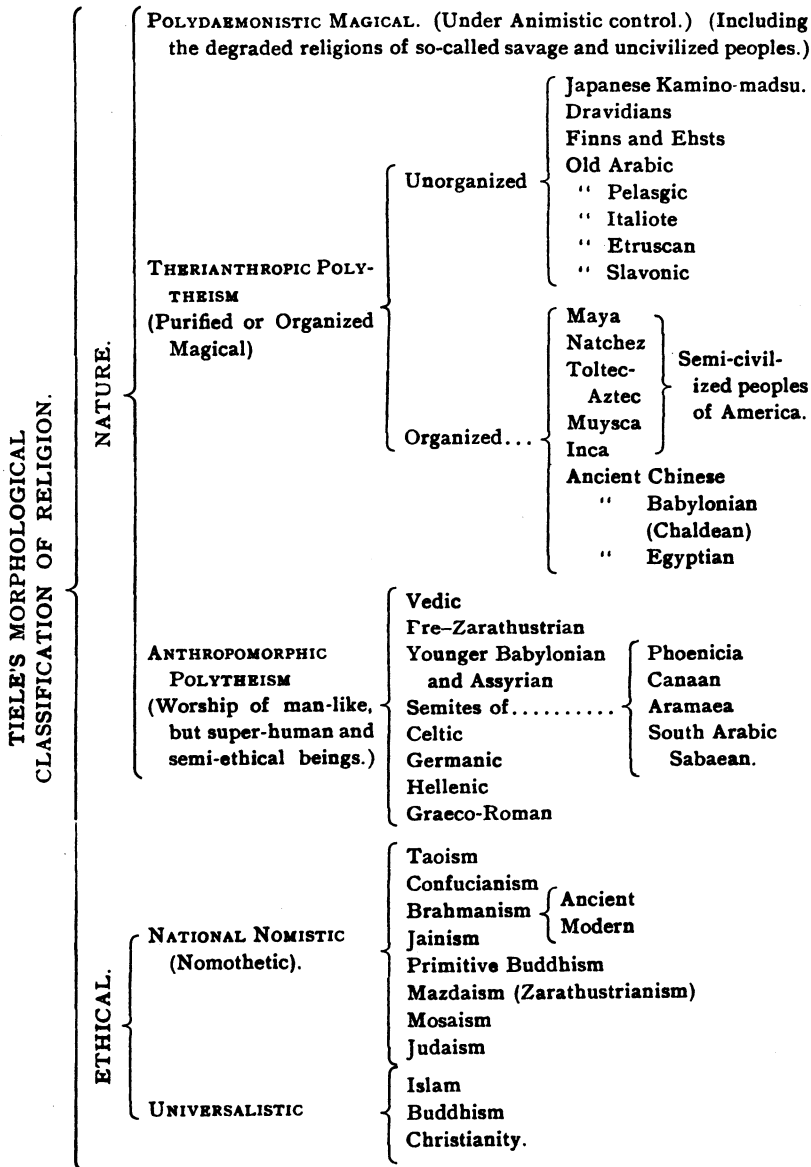
It must further be observed that in most cases these founders never shaped new bodies of doctrines, etc., but by inspiration of their life infused new and pregnant principles into others who later developed them into doctrines and founded upon them ceremonies, which in time became a great body of faith and practice, or another religion.

3. PROFESSOR TIELE, starting from this same external historic characteristic, has developed a classification far more tenable than either that of Professor Whitney or of Dr. Fairbairn. (See *Outlines of the History of Religion to the Spread of the Universal Religions*. Tr. by J. E. Carpenter, L. 1877. [New ed. in Dutch and German.] Also especially, his later statement in *Encyc. Brit.*, 9th ed. art. "Religion.") This comes from the fact that he has

penetrated beneath this external shell to the deeper meaning. He has, in the process, gone away from the mere historic phenomena to a philosophical distinction which is to be made between them. Nevertheless his treatment must be placed with historical classifications, because he looks at this difference as one that has come about in the process of development; in other words, the difference between his two great classes, though one intrinsic in kind, is at bottom evolutionally considered a difference of degrees or stages. The higher was once on the same stage in which we find the lower; the lower in course of time would naturally reach the higher. He claims that the essence of such divisions as that made by Prof. Whitney is true. "The principle of the one category is *nature*, that of the other *ethics*." Hence he makes these the basis of his "morphological" classification of religions. (See *Encyc. Brit.* 9th ed. "Religion." See also accompanying chart.)

With great differences in their degrees of elevation, the *nature religions* agree fundamentally in the fact that the supreme gods are "the mighty powers of nature, be they demons, spirits, or men-like beings, and ever so highly exalted." They are subject to change and progress through the unconscious drift of public opinion, and by the conscious alterations and additions of foreign modes of worship. "Gods are more and more anthropomorphized; rites, humanized." Then too they are susceptible of a moral progress, which begins by ascribing ethical attributes to the highest gods. Farther on in the more advanced stages of nature worship, ethical abstractions are personified, deified, and worshiped, at first indiscriminately and indistinguishably intermixed with the nature gods. By and by the stronger and clearer minds (the philosophers, sages, prophets) begin to perceive the difference. To them the latest elements or deities are of overshadowing—indeed of sole—importance. They preach the predominance of

the moral. Persecution ensues. The defenders of the old faith abhor these independent spirits whose mission is to



them mere destruction. They speak in derision of the pure abstractions by which these innovators would dethrone

the old and trusted gods of the fathers, and if the ancient faith has not lost too greatly its hold on the masses (as it generally has not at these early stages), these high thinkers—Socrates, Jesus, etc.—may pay the penalty of their elevation by premature and violent deaths. These simpler and more sensuous faiths with true instincts perceive the danger to the old traditions if such doubt and preaching are allowed to go on unmolested. A little infiltration may be tolerated, may indeed give an agreeable vivacity to religious life; “but the reform must not exceed certain limits,” for if it does, the old forms would plainly become superfluous. Finally when the new ideas have become wide-spread enough, the old ones meet the doom which from the first awaited them. No help can do more than make the process gradual; no arguments, however specious, no claims of sacredness, no assertions about superiority or universality can make head against the on-coming intellectual tendency. “No political power, no mighty priesthood, no poetry, no mysticism like that of the Neo-Platonists, no romanticism like that of Julian, not even an attempt to imitate the organization and the rites of an ethical religion, can save it any longer from utter decay.”

The tide of religious conception is now turned. The old nature religion may now be considered as advanced to the stage of an ethical religion, in that the predominant characteristic has changed. The traditional naturistic elements are not wholly set aside or excluded, but they are subordinated and assume somewhat of ethical functions. The more important of the old nature gods survive, but no longer occupy first places and dominate. On the contrary they take menial positions, become serving spirits, ministers, angels (*ἄγγελοι*, *yazatas*, etc.) before the supreme moral Orderer of the universe. A great breadth of conception has entered in. Man views the world not so much in its former conflicting diversities. The natur-

istic religious standpoint has been reversed. The polydæmonistic and polytheistic character is tending to monotheism. The polytheism is at least becoming organized and monarchical. To this is added greater individualism among the adherents. Conscious speculation, imagination and reflection increase. Growth goes on more by these than by unconscious national accumulation or change. Some higher central notion of a more definite sort of salvation to be attained comes into prominence. Organization for the purpose of fostering and propagating this idea takes place. Men bind themselves more closely together to aid in practicing it, and the religion is finally "instituted or organized" by later hands; while we may merely say it was "founded" by or received its original impulse from an individual or body of priests or teachers. These later organizers always ascribe to the "founders" a high standing in relationship with the Divine. They stand as inspired prophets to whom the Deity has revealed his will, as messengers expressly sent to direct men, as sons of the gods instructed with various missions, or indeed, as incarnations of God himself. So much on the general divisions of the topic.

Subdivision of Nature Religions. (See chart). Professor Tiele calls the very earliest stage of religion the *Polyzoic*. This he does not place in the outline, since we have no information concerning it. He thinks "man, in that primitive stage, must have regarded the natural phenomena, on which his life and welfare depend, as living beings endowed with superhuman magical power; and his imagination, as yet uncontrolled by observation and reasoning, must frequently have given them the shape of frightful animals, monstrous portentous mythical beings, some of which still survive in the later mythologies."

The earliest stage with which we have an acquaintance, he names the *Polydæmonistic Magical*. Animism is the

predominating characteristic, though the religion is not mere animism. Animism is a sort of primitive philosophy. The primitive mind has come to believe in a spirit which is superior to the body. This he extends to the phenomena of nature by supposing them to be the work of spirits of departed men. This is extended till everything living, moving, startling, extraordinary, is finally attributed as the work of mighty spirits moving freely here and there and abiding either permanently or temporarily in this or that object or region. The most powerful among them come to attain in man's mind the rank of divine beings, and are worshiped either as invisible or embodied spirits (spiritism or fetichism). Three special characteristics of this stage are noticeable: (1) Its confused and indeterminate mythology, though some spirits are more powerful than others, especially the heavenly, and in general there is a supreme spirit of heaven who is mightiest of all; (2) The implicit confidence in magic through which sorcerers and fetich-priests come to be held in such veneration; and (3) The predominance of fear over all other feelings and the doing of religious acts generally for selfish ends.

Therianthropic Polytheism is the name given to the next higher stage. The name is intended to describe the character in which the gods usually appear, viz., in the forms of animals and men, yet predominantly the former. They are really spiritual conceptions embodying themselves in these ways. Animal worship is everywhere in such religions a prominent characteristic. The gods are represented as men with animal heads, or as animals with human heads. Such religions have yet an element of magic, but it is in the hands of an organized priesthood, hence they are characterized as purified or organized magical religions. These practices are forbidden to private sorcerers, and in the hands of the priesthood have a developed ritual.

Some are very highly organized, others little. Some approximate very closely to the next higher stage of pure anthropomorphism, others closely to the next lower, of animistic predominance. In the former there is a strong tendency to monotheism, accompanied by a sort of theocratic government in which the king is the living representative of the king of the gods.

Next in order are the *Anthropomorphic Polytheisms*, the highest stage in the naturistic religions. These, as well as all the higher forms, contain many survivals of the characteristics of the earlier stages, yet those features have been adapted to newer ones and no longer predominate, and consequently the religion deserves another name. The gods are now all superhuman and manlike, rulers of nature, effecting good and evil. They are more ethical than the former, yet the mythology is sensual in character. Wars, wooings, revelries, and the lowest passionate indulgences are exceedingly frequent. Such myths, of course, were shocking to graver thinkers, but they formed the staple for the masses till the time of naturistic religious decay. "Not one of the religions in the polytheistic stage was able to elevate itself to the purely ethical standpoint; but, as moral consciousness went on increasing, deeper and more ethical religious ideas gathered round the persons of the most humane gods, the beloved son or daughter of the supreme deity, and gave rise to purer modes of worship which seemed to be forebodings of a time to come."

Subdivision of Ethical Religions.—The question of subdividing this class into *Nomistic* and *Universalistic* religions has called forth considerable discussion. The essential difference consists in the features that the former are based on sacred law drawn from sacred books, while the latter start from principles and maxims. (On the soundness of this asserted difference more will be said later.) Professor Kuenen used the expression "National Religions and Uni-

versal Religions" as the title of his Hibbert Lectures, (1882). He excluded Islam from the latter. Several other terms have been proposed for this class. Among the rest "world religions" and "world churches." The latter title was given by Professor Rauwenhoff (*Theol. Tijdschrift*, 1885, No. 1), who, however, rejects this method of classification. Professor Tiele himself would not use the term "world religions," unless as a sort of practical designation "to distinguish the three religions which have found their way to different races and peoples and all of which profess the intention to conquer the world, from such communities as are generally limited to a single race or nation, and, where they have extended farther, have done so only in the train of, and in connection with, a superior civilization." He granted that strictly speaking there can be only one world or universal religion. No religion has any claim to such a title from its achievements, whatever it may have in it potentially. Hence he adopted the more modest title "universalistic," in place of "universal" or "world," religions. Buddhism and Christianity are distinguished from Confucianism, Brahmanism, Jainism, Mazdaism, and Judaism, by their missionary spirit. The latter, after each becoming the religion of a single race, have ceased to spread, and after centuries of stiffening into dogmatism and formalism are slowly fading away; while the former number their adherents by hundreds of millions, are spreading among different races, and are rapidly making inroads upon the territory of other faiths.

This, said Professor Tiele, "cannot be due to some fortuitous or external circumstances only, but must have its principal cause in the very nature of each sort of religion." By other terms he described the one class as "nationalistic" or "particularistic" in contrast with the "universalistic." The three religions belonging to the latter class aspire to represent religious ideas which were not limited to the

nation's horizon, but which would have an interest for humanity, which would bespeak the general aspirations of the human heart. For this reason, two of these religions were rejected by the peoples to which their founders belonged by birth, and the third one, Mohammedanism, though founded by an Arab, derived its fundamental ideas from Jews and Christians and was raised to its high position by Persians and other peoples. Its unnational character is shown in the fact that its converts, whether made by force of arms or by missionary exertions, enjoy on embracing Islam the same rights and dignities as Arabs. So too Buddhism "looks for the man, the miseries of existence beset all alike, its law is a law of grace for all." That so broad is the Christian aim at its best, need not be here supported.

Though not on the same level, these religions are classed together because of their resemblance in origin and aim. Islam and Buddhism are only relatively universalistic, each showing the onesided religious development of its race at its highest. Islam emphasizes the absoluteness of the divine side at the expense of the human. Man is of no importance, hence he has but one duty, obedience. In such a system ethics cannot develop. Society must be conducted on a despotic basis. Buddhism puts the stress wholly on the human side. It knows no divine. Man must save himself by his own exertions. Self-renunciation, full and entire, is the way of escape from the miseries of life. The more truly religious has no place; or if it develops at all, it results in a childish fantastic mythology.

On Professor Pfleiderer's basis, that religion is the synthesis of dependence and liberty, Islam represents the former, Buddhism the latter. (Cf. this with Pfleiderer's classification farther on.) Christianity in its purest forms

fuses the two, dependence and liberty, the divine and the human, religion and ethics, into a real unity.

We have in this classification, on the whole, the most profound and profitable grouping thus far considered. In its development we receive many valuable suggestions. But good as we see it to be, satisfied or flattered as we may feel ourselves over the result, still we must as far as possible look at all the facts in these matters, and be governed as little as possible by our prejudices, desires, and the circumstances of where and under what influences we were born. In the spirit of such an outlook and such an attempt, several things must be said about this classification.

In the first place, to distinguish between *nomistic* and *universalistic* ethical religions on the ground given, is practically to make distinctions on the basis of features where there is no essential difference. Buddhism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism are each as truly sacred book religions as Confucianism, Judaism, etc. But they are in addition what he describes them—religions based on principles and maxims, on great central dominating ideas. This more definite characteristic, together with the facts that their bodies of doctrine cluster around distinct personalities, and that they have operated under more favorable opportunities as to civilization and coincidences in time, have largely occasioned their superior successes. He admits that other religions have extended farther than their race limits “in the train of or in connection with superior civilization.”

He distinguishes Buddhism and Christianity from the others by the fact that they are trying to make proselytes, while the others are doing so no more. But Islam cannot be excluded from this desire and activity. Again, the contrast shown between this feeling in their adherents and its absence in those of others, is due more to the superior moral development of those of their peoples who are so

engaged, than to an essentially restrictive national character of the religious side of those religions who are not so engaged. I say *religious side* of the religions, because we must not in our enthusiasm over and emphasis of the morality connected with a religion forget that this does not constitute the whole religion. Religion has its moral side, but morals are not religion. Religion should no doubt be helpful in the development of morals; but though it be of inestimable importance, this must not reach an eclipsing character. To make religion morality, and then to make morality our kind of morality, would be an easy way to decide that some peoples are devoid of both. But this is not science. When we say, this or that religion is not making proselytes, we must look for reasons before deciding that this is an intrinsic defect in the religion *per se*. It may be, as above indicated, from lack of moral development of the beneficent unselfish feeling of the people quite apart from any thing which the religious outlook alone would necessitate. It may be from other circumstances beyond the power of the votaries to hinder, e. g., we know that many religions are in a state of decay brought about by the destruction of their political support and by persecutions. Sometimes it may be from poverty of material resources to undertake. Sometimes, alas, by internal dogmatic development and formalistic decay. But from this last we must confess that the great missionary religions have not been free, and have in some countries hardened into as dead and disinterested a formalism as others. Witness Spain, Turkey, and Ceylon. Nor can we be at all certain that their fate would have been measurably different among those races, climates and environments where we find dormant and fading faiths. It may even be doubted whether the great religions accompanied by their best representative peoples would have maintained a living progressive faith under such political and climatic circum-

stances during thousands of years. It must be further observed, that below certain limits of intelligence, men will believe what they are taught. Men of faith would find no difficulty in being men of another faith, if the fates of life had put them in such an environment. It is only when a high degree of individuality of thought has made them think for themselves, that a religion becomes unbearable.

Along this same line of thought, his remark that the three universalistic religions were representatives of religious ideas which had in view not the special religious wants of the nation, but the more general aspirations of humanity, can scarcely be admitted as sound. Every devotee of every distinct faith or sect in the world believes that his religion represents *just such ideas* as would be of general interest to the race, if only he could get the race to see its interest and its duty of accepting his belief. He pities, deplores, complains, exhorts, or despairs and damns, according to the doctrines of his order, those who do not.

It is going too far to say that Buddhism and Christianity were rejected by the peoples to whom their founders belonged because they represented universalistic rather than national ideas. As stated above, the parent religions were full of the faith that their teachings were just such as the world as a whole needed, indeed must have, if it ever received salvation. Rather was it because the new faiths rejected and despised the old means, that they themselves were spurned and persecuted by the parent religions. It is true, they were a great advance in sympathy toward the world, and hence also a liberalized outlook. The new way of looking at religion filled the early adherents with new enthusiasm, new hope, and new confidence that the world could be brought to see and believe in this way (as new ways of looking at any cause, in or out of religion, always inspires to this); but that they any more seriously than

their predecessors in the old faith believed themselves to possess religious ideas of world-wide rather than national interest, is erroneous, and results in a denial to the old faiths of that which is essential to any and every faith. The faith of any individual or any people must necessarily in his or their mind be the faith for the world. If he or they do not preach it, it is either because external circumstances do not permit, because it lacks definiteness and clearness in the believer's own mind, or because they are so engrossed in its formalities as to be oblivious to what if conscious they would regard as others needs. If those founders of new religions had sought to generate a world-wide enthusiasm over the old lines and methods, history teaches us that they would never have been cast off. They cast themselves off before others cast them off. The founders and establishers opened the conflict by an absolute renunciation of the forms of the current religion. It might have been difficult, perhaps practically impossible, to have brought forward the new ideas with the continuance of all the old forms and methods. It is a historic fact that the idea which each of these three great faiths embodied was taken up by parties within the old religions, but only to a very limited extent were they successful. Why they were not more so, would be very difficult to ascertain. In Jainism we have the "national" form of the Buddhistic idea; in Ebionitism that of Christianity; and possibly in the Wahabites that of Islam. Perhaps at certain junctures of conditions a complete break with the old is the very best that can be done, although in general growth up, out of, and above is healthier, more enduring, and apt to be more wide-spread than reform by reaction and opposition. However, this is not here our present concern, but merely to see, in the truest light we can, why these faiths were not more lastingly successful among their own peoples. There might be many other reasons given. I will mention only

one, regarding the attitude of Judaism to Christianity, viz., that the position or too close relationship to God which both Jesus himself claimed and his followers who wrought out the doctrines more fully demanded for his personality, was revolting to the highly developed Jewish monotheistic sense of that time. The development of the conception as to the person of Christ had come about with the aid of ideas then prevalent which had their origin in Greek semi-mythological philosophy. The Jewish Semites had had for centuries no taste for mythology. The Prophets had drilled them into loyalty to Jehovah alone. He had no progeny nor co-rulers. Pauline theology set Christ up as his deity son, made him in many respects equal with God, and assigned to him a conspicuous part in the moral government and management of the world. Indeed, the primitive Christian idea added a new feature to the character of the Deity, but instead of putting it into the character of Jehovah, it embodied it in a new god or personage which it set up beside him. In this difference and claim alone we have nearly a sufficient explanation of the Jewish rejection of the new faith. To our day, this has remained the great and all hindering objection to Christianity by the Children of Israel. From their standpoint, it had its basis in mythology and idolatry; and since the days when the Decalogue was written, nothing has been more repugnant to a faithful son of Abraham than these.

Ethically the new faiths have, speaking in a general way, an intrinsic advantage, and this advantage was a natural outgrowth of the circumstance of an improving social development in the time of their origins. (See Prof J. R. Seeley's *Ecce Homo* for an excellent exposition of the social and moral causes at work in the Roman Empire at the beginning of the Christian era.) Moreover, this ethical advantage of these faiths would have availed nothing, had it not been for the indispensable aid afforded to their

success by the improving social and ethical relations. But we must again remind ourselves, that however important ethics may be for the practical every-day purposes of life, ethics is not all of religion. A classification might be made on the basis of the metaphysical characteristics of the objects of faith, in which case it would be impossible by the best results of our highest philosophy and science to sustain the assertion that these three great religions are more "universalistic" or more true to the facts than Brahmanism, Confucianism, or Mazdaism. Philosophy and Science have scarcely settled the question as to whether the truth lies with monistic idealism, monistic realism, or dualism. Nor have they been able to decide positively which is the more inspiring as a philosophy of life. Until something more definite is agreed upon regarding this more religious side of religion, it will not do for us to be too dogmatic in our assertions of superiority here or there merely on ethical grounds. Down to the present, ethics have been the feature of apparently greatest importance, yet we are not in the least sure but that when society shall have reached a relatively high moral development in which the crying demands of "live and let live" are heeded without great exertion, the ethical feature of religion will sink to be a matter of minor significance.

And now a final remark as to the confusion regarding the meaning of such terms as Christianity, Buddhism, etc. If, e. g., we mean by Christianity the teachings of its founder and establishers, we are constantly in danger of confounding (if we do not actually do so) the objective metaphysical and physical sides of that early (and to us the genuine) Christianity with nineteenth century ideas of theism and the universe. On a second thought, after turning to history, we perceive that increasing knowledge of facts and laws is gradually supplanting the early Christian ideas of the universe and with this changing the conception

of God. Again, if we mean by Christianity the standards of thought and duty of to-day prevalent among enlightened nations, the body of belief regarding the universe and man's relation to it and to his fellows, we perceive that we have undermined the ground of our frequent appeal to the original type as authority. For except in the spirit of sympathy, love or universal brotherhood, which is the common ideal of the two, they are as different as 1800 years of varying fortune could make them. Hence our appeal must take the character of a resource for inspiration and a refreshment of courage. Whichever or whatever our position may be, we should endeavor to avoid the fallacy of such an incoherent mixing of facts and principles and periods as that so often met with.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]